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# NEW MASSES

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## MICHAEL GOLD

# NOTES OF THE MONTH

The Communists won in every working-class district in the recent German elections. They tallied some four and a half million votes. The Fascists polled seven million. Both parties made an enormous leap forward at the cost of the Socialist party.

This is the configuration of our bloody and momentous decade. The harassed middle class of the world, ground between Big Business and the working-class, is turning to Fascist blood and iron for a solution of its economic problems. It is being led like a lamb to the slaughter. The starving moujik was injected with Czarist propaganda to the effect that his poverty could be solved by killing the Jews. The "poor whites" of the South are instructed that all their troubles come from the Negro. And now the world's middle class is being inflamed with the fallacy that the working-class is its enemy. And those who spread this notion, those who finance the Fascist movements everywhere, are precisely the big bankers and industrialists who themselves are wiping out the middle class.

Socialism has failed. It had its chance in Germany. The best it could do was to murder Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, then help Hindenburg break strikes. Socialism has its chance in England. The best it is doing is to imprison Gandhi and bomb non-resistant Hindu villages. It had its chance in Poland. All it has done has been to kill and oppress Jews and Workers. It had its chance in China, and has flowered into the unspeakable Chiang Kai Shek.

Socialism today seems to be nothing but a new capitalist method of enfeebling the working-class and preparing the ground for the Fascist dictatorship. It operates like the Christian gospel that missionaries bring into savage continents. The belligerent natives are first emasculated by a false, sentimental Christ, then comes the European with the whip to exploit them.

But the German middle-class turns to Fascism, the German workers turn to Communism. This is the irresistible conflict of our time. To understand our time, one must study the economic bases of these two political philosophies; everything else is irrelevance and obfuscation.

### An Honest Bourgeois Indignation—

Erza Pound has had, for fifteen years, a strong influence on the younger American writers. He has been a writer's writer; one of those craftsmen and pioneers because of whose restless experiment, lesser men often rise to popularity. He is a scholarly eccentric; and for an American writer has always had surprising interest in matters beyond his literary nose.

Found has lived in Italy for years. He is one of those curious Americans who live abroad, not because of political exile, but as

Russian aristocrats did under the Czar—the nation is too crude for them. He lives in Italy. He knows Italy better than America. And evidently, like T. S. Eliot and other American literary exiles, he has embraced Fascism. It must inevitably appeal to anyone having a basic contempt for the masses of humanity.

Here is a letter Erza Pound has written recently. It needs answering, because it expresses a growing state of mind among some American intellectuals:

Dear Mike:

What good do you think it does the proletariat or anyone else for you to get your ideas about Italy from the Saturday Evening Post? Have you any objection to soliciting an occasional news item, in say the Chicago Tribune?

Are you aware that Christianity emerged from Judaism and that a number of desirable features of Christianity still show their Hebrew origin? The idea that Marx was conscious, or that anybody is or was omniscient and that everybody else ought to do a bellylop in front of him and that his ideas (his ideas, his ideas) ought never to be questioned or discussed is repulsive to anybody who is not rooted to the guts with slave morale.

Do you honestly think (think) it does the proletariat any good to go about bawling that NOBODY except the proletariat has any rights whatsoever?

Is this attitude any different from that of the Chicago judge or any other bull moose magnate? It was recently stated by one in authority that a fascist membership card did not confer literary genius on the holder.

Does a communistic membership card confer literary genius on its holder?

Does intellectual cowardice confer any benefit on your party?

Does refusal to look a question, any question, is the face imply intellectual cowardice?

Do you know anything about the ideas behind the phrase "the co-operative state"?

Do you admit that people trying to solve a problem may have quite as much "to say" as those engaged in stating one phase of that problem that has already been stated and restated and restated to satiety?

The erection of a holy and infallible Marx is all the same as the erection of an holy and infallible pope, or any other tyranny that ends in brow beating people with cliché phrases.

New Masses and Vanguard Press have done valuable work in diffusing in brow beating people with constructive ideas and action in Russia. A pity to discount that by using the ostrich policy of Manchester Guardian, etc., and refusing to watch news from other countries.

Did you get your facts about Russia from the Stat. Eve. Post? You did not.

YOURS,

ERZA POUND

I like this letter. I like the overtones of it, and the image it conveys of the free gaudy Elizabethan man-of-letters, Erza Pound, suddenly shedding his Bohemian postures and shouting with honest bourgeois indignation against the insolent working-class.

This is really fun. "Do you honestly think it does the proletariat any good to go about bawling that NOBODY except the proletariat has any rights whatsoever?" Who do you mean, Erza, by NOBODY? Do you mean writers, or big bankers, or Mussolini, or the sweatshop boss, or prostitutes, or Al Capone? Or do you mean the little grocery storemen being knifed out of existence



DETTROIT, Mich.—When Margaret Baker went to the attic of her home in Hamtramck to hang up her washing, she found her husband, George, 42, hanging from a beam by his belt. She told police her husband had been despondent for some time because he was unable to find employment. Baker is survived by three children. — News Item

by the chain stores, or what? Whose "rights" are invaded by the proletariat? And what are "rights"? Aren't they always, according to Mussolini, Capone, and other authorities, that which one has the strength to grasp between the hands?

As to this bourgeois blather about our "deification and infallibility" of Marx; this stale old taunt that springs to the lips of every sophomoric, his weak little cry of distress when he hears Communism first discussed, and can't meet its questions:

Really, Ezra, this is unworthy of you. You are an original of a sort, and you should recognize the great place of the originals in modern thinking. One can't discuss biology without mentioning Darwin. One can't discuss psycho-analysis without naming Freud. And can one discuss any social theory today without introducing the name of Marx?

Yes, he is the red rag in the face of all the bourgeois bulls. They have never read Marx, they don't know why he is respected and

quoted, but they hate him instinctively, and their instinct is quite sound. Marx is the intellectual father of the world revolution today. It was he who first disclosed to the working-class the roots of the tyranny under which it groans. It was he who first taught it that its historic mission was to destroy the old world and create a new.

The lesson is being learned; and there are many, many gentlemen in the world today who shudder and cross themselves hastily when the unholy name of Marx is mentioned. I never thought Ezra Pound was one of these pot-bellied "free spirits."

*The "Co-Operative State."*—

But the nub of Pound's letter is his reiterated demand: what in hell do you know about Mussolini and his "co-operative state"? How dare you attack fascism when you know nothing about it? Ezra, I assure you that we KNOW. We know too well; we have read, analyzed, thought and sweat these ten years, reflecting on this thing. It may be a new discovery to you; to us it has become as familiar as Herbert Hoover's "co-operative state." In fact, it is the same thing: Big Business on the throne, Labor in the ditch. When a cheese goes putrid, it becomes Limburger, and some people like it, smell and all. When the capitalist state starts to decay, it goes fascist.

When Labor gets too powerful in a country, the capitalists finance a Mussolini, as they did in Italy, and turn him loose. He is their hired gunman; nothing more or less. The first thing he does on assuming power is what Mussolini did: he burns down union halls and co-operatives; he assassinates in foul, cowardly ways thousands of labor and peasant leaders. He terrorizes the Workers; he feeds them castor-oil; he cuts their throats at night; this is Fascism everywhere.

Not a single capitalist, or banker, or war profiteer, or rich man lost a single hair of his head in Mussolini's revolution. Only the poor were slaughtered. Remember that, Ezra, when you talk about "co-operation."

*Ideology*—

Do not be misled by ideology, Ezra. When J. P. Morgan tells you that he is an art-lover, and has lived only for Art and Antiques, you know he is only trying to shield something; piracy, for instance. Mussolini's original program was to kill Workers and destroy their organizations. The Fascist philosophy came years later. When he says it was what he originally butchered Workers for, he lies.

Search to the roots. The roots are in economics, as ever. Capitalism is still enthroned in Italy. Fascism was a militarist method for preserving Capitalism in a bad hour. The "co-operative state" is only its peacetime method.

Even a Mussolini cannot be constantly using the stiletto and club on his subjects. Any nation, in the last analysis, can be governed only with the consent of its population. Mussolini and his business underwriters have learned that. Political disorder hurts business. So they have sought a way of peace under capitalism. They have developed the theory of the "co-operative state."

It is another way of establishing capitalism forever. It assumes that there must always be economic classes in a state; the men who own, and the men who work. And it assumes that these permanent classes have a mutual interest in preserving the status quo; and that justice means, both should be represented in the political administration.

So that labor unions are really unnecessary, strikes are unnecessary; anything at all that hurts Big Business is both traitorous and unnecessary.

It's a beautiful new shiny theory—for Capitalists. We are hearing it here in America—through the lips of the National Civic Federation, and Congressman Fish, and class-collaborationist liberals like Leo Wolman, George Soule and the like.

It won't work, Ezra. In the first depression the bosses begin cutting wages and throwing men on the streets to starve. And there's the beginning of the end of your "co-operative state." It's a fraud, a lie, a trap, a promise for weary slaves. It is like the "freedom" won by the Irish Free State. It is the kind of Socialism Bismarck offered to the German nation. It leads to the next world war, for it is based on an intense nationalism—the German Fascists against the Italian and French Fascists.

It is the Roman peace. It offers the mountain lion three square meals a day in a cage. It is the capitalist utopia and the prolet-



William Gropper.

TEACHER: "... And he didn't have a penny. Now he's got his picture on all the pennies in the bank."

tarian hell. It can't work. There never can be peace between the have and have-nots. History is the long record of the failures of those other Mussolinis who tried to weld this peace.

The class struggle is the fatal disease in the body of capitalist society. Fine programs, Caesarian schemes, can give the patients a false feverish spasm of health; they cannot cure him. Capitalism is doomed; and all its hired assassins and all its decoy schemes like this one, can't save it much longer.

I am sorry you think otherwise. I am sorry, Ezra Pound, when an honest man like yourself falls for a cheap lie like this one.

Rah! Rah! Rah! BLAH!—

School opens. Millions of youth have returned to the high schools and colleges of America. In other lands, the students are a flaming political group. They have manned the barricade; they have led marches against many a tinpot Caesar. Their marriage to the working class in nations like China, Russia, India, Japan, has been a huge factor in revolution.

In America—what ashes in the mouth! Who can respect youth that is as mediocre as this? Where is the daring mind, the generous right arm, the experiment and romance? Is our future in the hands of this gray horde of robot minors?

A campus is a more gloomy graveyard than a Rotary banquet or Fifth Avenue church. One catches no sparkle of the wild and boundless living world. These sleek bums and snobs; with their gin parties, and feeble sex adventures and puerile football passions—one knows them at a glance. They will be like their fathers. They are only waiting to become stockbrokers and advertising men, parasites and salesmen. They are money-minded; they are the future hired men of Big Business.

I have seen a few thousand men in various prisons. Uniformly, their faces were more intelligent, sensitive and alive than the bland faces I have seen around campuses. There is better conversation and loftier thinking in any American jail than in any American college. Ask anyone who has seen both.

#### The Intelligent Minority—

There is, of course, the intelligent minority in every college. But it leads a precarious underground life. It is suspected by the authorities and students. Intelligence is a felony in any American college.

William James in his essay on the Ph.D. fallacy, said that its rebels had always been the glory of Harvard, all that redeemed it as a university. One can say the same of every other college today. Having said this, one wonders why an intelligent youth should waste precious years of his life in petty revolt inside a college?

Isn't there more education to be gotten in a year's boisterous trip across America than in a college year? Isn't there more harsh reality in a Ford factory than in a classroom? A strike lasting over three months will teach anyone more of politics, economics, and the folly and grandeur of humanity than he will learn sitting at the feet of most college profs. Six months in Soviet Russia will do more for the mind of any young American than four college years; of this I am sure.

College is a place for the training of dull stockbrokers and duller college professors. If one has no hankering for either of these meaningless careers, one doesn't need the conventional college. There are a few good labor colleges where one can get the solid rudiments of an education among one's intelligent equals; and there is the wide world to explore.

#### John Reed's Anniversary—

The best men grow only after leaving college. It takes about five years to forget all the useless nonsense and lies. I took John Reed about that time to shake off the Harvard opium. He was the gayest and most popular member of his class—a social mixer, a light comedy poet, the usual adventurous college aristocrat. He came out to write brilliant and conventional magazine stories that sold at high prices, and to be a Greenwich Village bohemian.

Harvard turns out hundreds of young blades every year like Jack Reed; (like him superficially, of course.) They soon evolve into sporting bond salesmen with Southhampton connections; or assistant dramatic critics, or soft-job newspapermen, or Harvard Club loungers; or in time of war, well-dressed officers.

The conventional path of success lay before Jack Reed like a red carpet rolled from a taxicab to a swell New York speakeasy. He did not walk it; he chose a rougher road. And now he is dead under the Kremlin wall; and his old friends who are still college-boys in spirit mourn him as a failure.

Yes; he might have been as successful as his friend Julian Street, who recently mourned for him in this fashion in the *Saturday Evening Post*. He might have remained a "good fellow", and a Harvard man, and earned \$50,000 a year writing moral and sentimental tales, and spent it all on booze and country estates and wolfhounds and swell cars and butlers; constantly drunk, constantly writing, constantly in debt.

This is Success among the authors of America. But Jack Reed rode through and reported the Mexican revolution; and he chose to fight beside the workers in Faterston; and he chose to write the great book of the Russian Revolution, and to give his rich manhood and heart's blood to the great proletarian cause.

And this is called failure in America.

It is ten years since John Reed died. It becomes more certain each year that he is now immortal. In Soviet Russia he is a legend; he is their Lafayette. The opera *John Reed*, based on his life, was performed this season in Moscow. His book, *Ten Days*, with the preface by Lenin, has sold in the millions in Soviet Russia, in Germany, China and elsewhere. He is known to the world of the working class: a pure knight of the revolution, who gave his genius and blood to set the Workers free.

William James said that its rebels redeemed Harvard; one might paraphrase this, to say that its rebels have almost redeemed America. In the eyes of the world's masses, America would seem like a gruff, horrible, monolithic monster with but a single national lust; that, lust for gold; but that America has produced a John Reed, and a Gene Debs, and a Bill Haywood, and a Communist Party and a Joe Hill; a long line of proletarian heroes and mass uprisings.

There is another America; and John Reed was one of its inspired poets and soldiers. He is not forgotten; he will never be forgotten. The future belongs to the working-class; and John Reed will burn like a bright star in that future.

## JOHN DOS PASSOS

## JACK REED

was sent east to school by his folks who were substantial people in Portland Oregon and went to Harvard.

Reed was a good mixer a good spender he wasn't a Jew or a socialist and he didn't come from Roxbury so he made the grade at Harvard and liked it. He was husky greedily had appetite for everything. A man's got to like many things in his life.

Reed was a man he liked men he liked women he liked eating and writing and foggy nights and drinking and rhymed verse and the swimmingteam and football and being cheerleader ivy orator making clubs and the set best clubs, his blood didn't run thin enough for the best clubs.

and Copsey's voice reading *The Man Who Would Be King* the dying fall *Verdant* the best English prose the lamps coming on across the Yard under the chime in the twilight *quantum Arithmetic* a crowd among the best ever from Haymarket Square jiggling through the blind factory streets of Cambridgeport the drunks the yardcop ah *Mephistopheles*

chim voices in lecturehalls the dying fall and the chime the Discobolus toasted sandwiches at night under the *Lamp* the bricks of the old building the commemorative gates and the geologies and the deans and the instructors all crying in thin voices refrain

refrain. The rusty machinery cranked the deans quivered under their mortalwards the cops turned to Class Day and Reed was out in the world

Washington Square conventional turned out to be a crossword and Villon seeking a lodging for the night in the Italian tenements on Sullivan Street, Bleeker, Carmine

R. L. S. was a great cocksman so research has proved and as for the Elizabethans...

To hell with them;

ship on a catboat and see the world have adventures you can tell funny stories about every evening the quickening pulse the feel that today in footsteps taxicabs women's eyes dash chili sauce on Europe pulp Paris like an oyster;

but there was more to it than that and Line Steffens talked the cooperative commonwealth in a voice as fellow as Copsey's, Diogenes Steffens with Marx for a lantern going through the west looking for a good man to reform abuses

Jack Reed wanted to live in a tub and write verses but he kept meeting bums workmen goodguys who were out of luck

he couldn't keep his mind on his verses with so many people out of luck.

In school hadn't he learned the Declaration of Independence by heart? Reed was a westerner and words meant what they said. His mind was fresh from the west, when he said something stand-

ing with a classmate at the Harvard Club bar he meant what he said from the soles of his feet to the waves of his untidy hair.

His blood wasn't thin enough for the Harvard Club and the Dutch Treat Club and respectable New York freebale Bohemia.

Reed was husky greedily had appetite for everything. A man's got to love many things in his life.

In 1913 he went over to Paterson to write up the strike, the textile workers parading beaten up by the cops the strikers in jail

before he knew it he was a striker he was parading beaten up by the cops in jail

he wouldn't let the editor bail him out he'd learn more with the strikers in jail

he learned enough to put on the pageant of the Paterson Strike in Madison Square Garden

he learned enough to know that there was something to be done about the people who were out of luck

The *Petrograd Magazine* sent him to Mexico to write up Pancho Villa

Pancho Villa taught him to write and the skeleton mountains and the tall organ cactus and the armored trains and the bands playing in little plazas full of dark girls in blue scarfs

and the bloody dust and the ping of rifle shots in the enormous night of the desert and the brown quietvoiced peons dying starving killing for liberty

for land for water for schools Mexico taught him to write.

Reed was a westerner and words meant what they said.

The War was a blast that blew out all the Diogenes lanterns The good men began to gang up to call for machineguns. Jack Reed was the last of the great race of warcorrespondents who ducked under censorship and risked their skins for a story.

Jack Reed was the best American writer of his time. If anybody had wanted to know about the war they could have read about it in the articles he wrote

about the German front the Serbian retreat

Salonique behind the lines in the tottering empire of the Czar dodging the secret police jail in Cholim.

The brasshats wouldn't let him go to France because they said one night in the German trenches he'd pulled the string on a German gun pointed at the heart of civilization to please the German guncrew. What did it matter who pulled the string Reed was with the boys who were being blown to hell with the Germans, the French, the Russians, the Bulgarians, the seven little tailors in the ghetto in Salonique

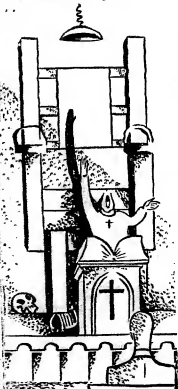
and in 1917 he was with the soldiers and peasants in Petrograd in October

Smolny *Ten Days That Shook the World*; Reed wrote that for all time

no more Villa no more Harvard Club Provincetown Players plans for Greek theatres rhyming verse good stories of an oldtime warcorrespondent who was scared of nothing this wasn't fun anymore

this was grim, Delegate, back in the States, indictments Wilson cramming the jails, forged passports speeches secret documents riding the rails across the *corros* *sancture* hiding in the bunkers on steamboats Jail in Finland all his papers stolen

No more chance to write now no more warm chats with every



Walter Quirt  
PULPIT, 1930 MODEL.



William Siegel

guy you met up with the college boy with the nice smile talking himself out of trouble with the judge.

At the Harvard Club they're all in the intelligence service making the world safe for Morgan.

That old tramp sipping his coffee out of a tomatocan's a spy of the General Staff.

The world's no fun anymore  
only machinegun fire and arson  
starvation hunger lice bedbugs cholera typhus  
no lint for bandages no chloroform or other thousands dead of  
gangrened wounds cordon sanitaire and everywhere spies.

The windows of Smolny glow white hot like a bessemer  
no sleep in Smolny

Smolny the giant plant running twentyfour hours a day grinding  
down men nations hopes impulses fears  
rawmaterial  
for the foundations  
of the new order.

A man has to do many things in his life

Reed was a westerner words meant what they said  
he threw everything he had into the furnace  
that was smelting the steel  
of the first workers' republic  
U S S R

he wrote undertook missions there were spies everywhere  
worked till he dropped  
caught typhus and died in Moscow  
alone.

He's buried in the Red Square.

## American Rhapsody

By Kenneth Fearing

*Let us introduce, this gala night,  
night of love, and murder, and reckoning, and sleep,  
creeping of illusion, night filled with thousands intent upon  
ordained ends,  
let us introduce, at the regular hour, a few leading citizens in  
private scenes, a selection of the neighbors in unrehearsed  
acts.*

Meet handsome, tragic, aristocratic, sardonic John T. Webb, head  
of the advertising staff.

"Did you ever feel you were the spectator at some gorgeous  
farce?"

His wife arranging a Paris divorce, meet cold-cash Webb on  
the drugstore telephone. "Cuteness, don't you trust your  
Honeyboy Jack?"—he's an on-the-level guy, that different  
type.

"The Grand Duke Boris smokes the good cigarette."

Meet the popular ghost, Franklin Devos, serial hero of the maga-  
zines, the exact, composite dream of those who read.

An artist in commerce, a warrior in love,  
tonight the ectoplasm of Mr. Devos hovers inescapably every-  
where about us,  
that profitable smile invisible above the skyscrapers, those  
serene eyes piercing night-courts, clinics, tenements, his  
jaunty presence felt over remote villages and farms.

That breadline.

*Salvation before coffee and rolls.*

"Last night a number of you gentlemen hurried through the  
banquet and dashed around to the mission next door for  
another slice of bread. Is that gratitude? Is that decent?  
Is that wise?"

That genius, that literateur, Theodore True,

St. Louis boy who made good as a Frenchman in theory, a  
rabbi in religion, a cipher in politics.

Here is Mr. True, nervous and tall and thin and grave.

Closing prices: *Is This Really a Commercial Age?*—100. *That  
Tortured Soul of Marcel Proust*—150. *That Old American  
Common Sense*—210.

We present the talking-picture queen, and the superfilm.

"Will the son of the patrician brothel magnate wed the lovely  
surgeon's daughter, O America?"

And the Bloomer twins (they were good with those machine-  
guns, when they knew the judge) tonight awaiting execu-  
tion.

The senator at that microphone. That shrewd revolutionist,  
janitor Jake.

"I killed her because she had an evil eye." "We are not thinking  
now of our own profits, of course." "Nothing can take  
back from us this night." "Let me alone, you God damn  
rat." "Two rickies." "Cash."

These are some of the characters.

A few billion micrococci and nerve cells complete the cast.  
Properties for the scenes: One room, one table, one chair, one  
bed.

The dust of forgotten cities. Elegant Caesar. Christ on the  
cross. Lazarus. And yourself also, you too.

These are merely close-ups.

At a distance those eyes and faces and arms,  
maintained in the expiation of living, scarred in payment exacted  
through knife, flicker, silence, hunger, treachery, regret,  
melt into an ordered design, dim and glamorous, and not with-  
out peace.

## MARY HEATON VORSE

## AT THE MEETIN'\*

The crowd milled around the speaking stand. A row of men sat on the raised embankment. On the outskirts of the crowd were little families—a man and a woman and several babies playing around. They sat down on the ground. Ma Giffillin and the Miss' Whence cruised through the crowd, stopping everywhere to ask:

"Ain't Fer acumin'? You seen Miss Irma?"

They were both dressed in long, gray calico dresses, patched and worn but clean. They had no teeth, but they showed vigour and spirit. They had never had anything as exciting as this come into their experience before.

A heady feeling ran through the crowd, a vibration of excitement. Every one was full of expectation. Talk drifted around of exciting events.

"The boss came to my house. 'When you comin' back to work?' he said—"

"You git along quick or I'll arrest you," he tole me. I said, 'Arrest me! I don't fear if you do arrest me!'"

"Did you yere how Mamie Pratt went back to work—"

"They's scabs livin' along-side of me—"

"What you reckon Fer is? You reckon he's been kidnapped again?—"

Pan Marks said to Max Harris,

"Reckon we'd best begin this here meetin'. Reckon somethin's haddin' up Fer." They gave each other a significant look. They were men in their late twenties and early thirties, powerful, well built, able. They had none of the indirection which assuils some crowds of workers when they have no leadership. The two men who had organized the workers in the beginning could carry on meetings and picket lines.

Pan called the meeting to order.

"Our speakers is a little late, friends," he said, "so we may'st well begin. An' we can't begin any better than to let Brother Williams lead us in prayer."

Brother Williams, whose long hair hung down under his wide hat and mingled with his long gray beard, closed his eyes tightly, raised his head to Heaven, spread his arms out in the form of a cross, and began:

"Oh, how these people have suffered, Lord!

"Oh, Lord, hear them in their struggle!

"Oh, Lord, oh, soften the hearts of their employers!

"Oh, I never heard anything like how they treat these folks!

"Oh, I come from the mountains where folks is free to breathe God's free air!

"Oh, I seen women and little, little children aworkin' in the mills whar they wasn't meant to!

"Oh, the Lord sent the children of Israel out of bondage!

"Oh, the Lord softened Pharaoh's heart!

"Oh, ain't Basil Schenk's heart goin' to be softened?

"Oh, this ole man ain't never seen nothin' like these milshy with their tear-see bombs and their bayonets!

"Oh, they're apracin' all over the town!"

"Oh, they're arrestin' girls and wimmin."

He went on with his chant, staccato, exciting, until the meeting swayed in unison with his cry; until there was a low sigh of "Oh," throughout the audience. The old women stood with their eyes tightly closed. The young men and young women watched him intently. The prayer had knit them together and focused their emotion into a flame.

Dan said, "We may as well go on and hold our meetin' till Fer and the others git here. Now, here's a sister that's made up song-balls. She's writ 'em herself. Youall mought o' heard her asingin' of 'em up to the relief store some days. Now, I have

got Mamie Lewes to sing out loud before all of you folks, though she says she's ashamed to do it."

Old Ma Giffillin called out:

"Mamie Lewes, don't you be 'shamed. Weall admires fer to hear you sing your song-balls."

Mamie Lewes was helped on the stand. She had her air of expectancy as though wishing for something pleasant and exciting to happen. She threw her head back and sang easily and without effort. She had a natural voice, untrained but very sweet.

"We leave our homes in the morning,  
We kiss our children good-by,  
While we slave for the bosses,  
Our children scream and cry.

"And when we draw our money  
Our grocery bills to pay,  
Not a cent to spend for clothing,  
Not a cent to lay away.

"How it grieves the heart of a mother  
You every one must know,  
But we can't buy for our children  
Our wages are too low.

"It is for our little children  
That scums to us so dear,  
But for us war them, oh, workers,  
The bosses do not care."

They listened to this with moist eyes. It was their own story, put in incredibly simple terms. Every one had lived through this. There was no piece of sentiment; it was the history of every one there put into song.

The policemen were there—the "laws" had come. Usually but one policeman stood on the outskirts of the crowd. To-day there were several: prowling through the strikers and seeing nothing special going on, they started to go away.

Old Ma Giffillin climbed up on the stand. "I got somethin' to say," she proclaimed. "I seen the laws awalkin' round yere. We didn't ask 'em to come, with their bloody hant's that's been punchin' us an' arrestin' us, in our meetin'. Their hearts is too hard to be softened even if they yere Brother Williams aprayin'. An' I want to tole Mister Policeman Zober that the only part of him I keers fer to see is the hind sides of him agoin' away from me like they's adoin' now!"

A roar of laughter went up. They were rocking together. Something alive and quick emanated from them. They felt a sense of companionship and power. The crowd had its own powerful vitality. It had a beauty which was also a little dangerous. These people, individually so poor and so weak, were strong. The eyes of the young girls and the young men were bright. They were ready for anything. Danger beckoned them.

While the laughter was still booming and echoing through the crowd and the scarlet-faced policeman was making his way back to the street, Fer came plunging along. Shouts greeted him.

"Fer!" they shouted. "Fer! Fer!"

He took the platform. He felt the weight of their faith, and his own smallness and inadequacy.

A big girl, one of Ma Giffillin's daughters, came up to Mamie Lewes.

"You do sing beautiful, Mamie Lewes," she said.

"Yore abraggin' on me."

"No, I ain't abraggin' on you. It's the truth. You live a piece from yere?"

"Yeah, quite a piece."

"Ma sez come over to our house and rest you and eat a bite."

\*Printed on the first anniversary of the murder of Ella May Wiggins in Gastonia—From a strike, a forthcoming novel by Mary Heaton Vorse. (Harvest Livestock, \$2.00).



She was bigger and stronger than Mamie Lewes, and looked older. "Is yore husband left you too, Mamie Lewes?" she asked.

"He didn't rightly leave me. He just went to git work and didn't come back. I wasn't 'spec-tin' him to leave me."

"That's how they do. My husband and I, I kinda suspicioned he was leavin' me. He says to me, 'Daisy, you take the baby over to Ma's while I'm gittin' work, and git you a job in the Nuren factory of you kin, and I'll be ascutin' for a good place.' Then I never did yere from him no more."

"Yes, my Will was like that."

"I don't think they aim for to leave us always. They's lots of 'em on the mill hill, they husbands goes, and they don't come back."

"They git discouraged. My husband los' his ambition when the chillen died with dipthoracy."

"Well, wouldn't you think they would lose their ambition? 'Spect it seems good to be able to use all your wages on yourself. Joe West made fourteen dollars and forty cents—I know him to make up to eighteen, then when I was workin' too, we was right smart well off for a spell, but don't seem like luck lasts long."

"No, luck don't seem never to last long with us mill hands. You only got one chil', Mis West?"

"I bed four. I los' three. How long you been workin' in the mill?"

"I'm jist workin' since I was ma'ed. I was ma'ed eleven years ago. I'm twenty-nine now."

"So you was real ole when you begun. How come you was so ole?"

"We was mountain folks, an' come a man from the mills atalkin' how much folks made. Mc an' Will thought 't' money grew on trees down yere ahearin' his talk, so when we got ma'ed we come down. Seems like they's been nothing but trouble since. How long you been aworkin'?"

"Huh, me? I was ten when I began workin' in the mill. I'm twenty-six now, and I worked sixteen years. When I begun I worked twelve hours a day for seventy-five cents a week."

"Lawd! that was awful young! Up with us in the mountains we don't have much but they's fresh air. Seems like you could breathe. I got awful homesick for to go back to the hills. We lived beyon' Asheville."

"Why don't you go? What all's keepin' you yere of you got kin up there?"

"Oh, I got kin. I got Ma and Pappy, but however would I got money nuff to go? Fer me an' my four chillen 'twould cost me all o' eighteen dollars." Daisy West shook her head. They both looked at the impossibility of getting eighteen dollars.

"Emmhow, I want to stay and help win this strike. I want to see this Union grow so our chillen won't have to work like we done. It's jist about all the things I'll be able to git my chillen. I can't git 'em no school, no clothin, no shoes, but maybe I'll leave 'em a Union."

5

They had got to the house which was placed sharply on a side of the hill. The red ground around it was broken hard, but there was one tree in back and some flowers at one side.

They went in the house, which had four rooms. Ma Giffilin, Flora, her youngest girl. Daisy and her children slept in one room, and they rented the two others. One to a married couple with a child. Four boys lived in the front room, Will Giffilin, who was a boy of eighteen with strong and delicate features, Dewey Bryson, and two other boys who hadn't been there long. The three boys boarded with them, paying five dollars a week a piece for room and board which was a dollar less than they would have had to pay in a regular boarding house. The married couple did their own cooking and were planning on having a house of their own presently when they could pay the installment on their furniture. They were very young.

"Every one o' 'em," said Ma Giffilin, "has jined the Union. Jones didn't want to jine, but I didn't give him no indulgence to seab in. I says 'Jine or git,' so he jined. I reckon he was afeard



**BIG BUSINESS:** "In the coming elections all law abiding elements must be directed against the danger of Communism."

that my boy or Wes would bus' his haid for him ef he didn't."

"I wiah I could live in a nice house like this. You got 'lectric lights, ain't you?"

"Yeah, we git lights."

"Is they water?"

"No, they ain't water, weall got to go out to the facet for our water. They say they's goin to let in water but they ain't doo hit."

"My, how nice to live in a house where they was water runnin', jist go to yore sink and turn on yore water! That mus' be wonderful, and havin' a separate kitchen."

6

"However do you come to think up yore ballits, Mamie Lewes?"

Ma Giffilin asked.

Mamie Lewes clasped her hands around her knees and looked with her clear, alert stare. She was puzzled about the matter herself.

"I can't rightly tell yo'. I was jist ahunmin' thet ole ballit to myself and first I know I was singin' the first two lines out loud. I was singin':

*"We leave our house in the mornin',  
We kiss our children good-by."*

an' I sung it over an' over, an' the last two lines come and I sung and then I wint and I writ 'em down. I was glad I knew how to write them."

"You went to school, Mamie Lewes?"

"Yeah. We wasn't so fur from a school. I went through up to th' fifth grade an' I would 'a' gone more ef Ma hadn't tuk sick with the misery in her back."

"An' huccum you thought thet rest of thet ballit, Mamie Lewes? Did it jist come in yore haid?"

"Yeah, jist seems like it comes into my haid. They's other ballits that I'm apanderin' on. Seems like I'll git a line then like it'll slide off from me, most like it was somethin' alive tryin' to git away."

West Elliott came in.

"Why, howdy, Mis' Mamie Lewes," he said. "How did youall git yere?"

"Mis' West, she ast me. I didn't know youall lived yere. 'Twas Wes yere got me to jine up with the Union."

"Fen, Wes is a gent one to bring youall into the Union. If he don't git 'em in by kind words he'll see of a lump on the haid won't git 'em." Ma Giffilin laughed, a high, cove laugh. They sat together, curiously united in their beliefs in the Union.

A strike was dangerous adventure. New and exciting as warfare. They sat in front of Ma Giffilin's coal stove, while the grits were cooking, and talked about the time when the strike would be won.

## THE LYNCHING — by William Gropper



"Get The Nigger!"



"He's got 'em"

## HOBBS: An Industrial Idyll

by Norman Macleod

Overnight southeastern New Mexico has become industrialized. Promising one of the biggest oil fields in the history of the country, Hobbs has concentrated a cross section of America in the space of three months. As soon as oil was discovered every comestible man, and its pugilistic pimps. Most of the land was leased for twenty-five cents an acre from the State, and soon the wells were spouting oil and money. The tidal came in with 22,000 barrels a day just some weeks ago.

All the operators are jubilant. Two newspapers are already singing paeans of prosperity. With a combined population fluctuating between ten and twenty thousand, New Hobbs, All Hobbs and Old Hobbs are fighting for political control. Three towns in a cramped area, two of which interest each other. Each with a mayor, city council, chamber of commerce, red light district, gambling dens, speakeasies and thousands of unemployed.

About twelve men have been murdered in three months. In the last ten days two workmen have fallen to their death. An oil worker plunged from a rig under construction ninety feet to the ground, bouncing like a rubber ball from one steel crossbeam to another. He hit the earth head downward and crumpled like an accordion. They gathered him up and shipped him back to Louisiana.

The skyline is a network of industrialism. The throb of innumerable exhaust pipes and the pound of machinery establish the rhythm of the towns. Until night when the dark is gouged

with red. Hundreds of men pimp, hijack or they starve to death. And the operators are worried. If this should get out, Hobbs would no longer be the paradise incipient in the eyes of New Mexicans.

Of course, the red light houses and the speakeasies pay. They take care of the workers who could afford a family now, but next year? So the whores and the bootleggers stand in good with the companies. But the unemployed? Something had to be done. Thousands of men were out of work.

Deputy Sheriff Leo W. de Cordova (with Castilian blood in his veins) speaks for himself (and others) in a recent issue of *The Hobbs Times-Herald*, "Most of them (the unemployed) have gone. A part of them have been run out of town and the balance, who are seen on the streets daily, are the men who are off turn." I walked through the streets from one town to another. I questioned these "men who are off turn." Nearly all of them were out of work and practically starving. They don't read the smug editorials in the local news sheets. But there are only about two thousand of them. Most of them were run out of town by the self-constituted vigilantes of the corporations. Let them die some place else. Anybody knows that eight thousand unemployed out of a population of sixteen thousand constitutes a menace to the powers that be.

And don't believe for a moment that some of them don't die. A coroner's jury sitting over the body of a worker in Tucumanari returned a verdict of death from natural causes. These natural causes boiled down to starvation. He was found in a ranch house with his body slightly decomposed, and in his pockets nine cents, one cigarette, and papers indicating that he had sold an invention to the Baltimore and Ohio railroad for twenty dollars. He had probably been run out of Hobbs. Better that he die in



"O. K. Boys . . ."



"You'll never get in another union, you . . ."

Tuacumcari than in Hobbs, selling the name of that fair city which already has a record sensational enough.

But the operators get rich and the prostitutes, pimps and bootleggers do a thriving business. Liquor is fifty cents a glass. All night with some hardboiled damsel constitutes an equivalent of fifteen dollars and whatever else the carouser happens to have in his jeans (which usually isn't much).

The traveling representative of the *El Paso Post* is quoted as characterizing Hobbs as "the most orderly oil town he had ever seen." An impersonal paragon of all the industrial and capitalistic virtues fortified with the church, for they have religion. The Baptist preachers (colored and white) both assured me that this was so. It was only the unemployed who were godless. The working men knew which side their bread was buttered on and god had helped them.

And yet the editor of one of the newspapers told me that if he wrote what he knew of Hobbs he would wake up to find himself dead. And that would be all there was to that! The money interests couldn't afford to have the town run down. We stay here because we are boosters, say the lawyers, the editors and the preachers.

And a new oil gusher comes in every other day. The natural gas is dissipated into air. Workmen are killed to the tune of about two a week. And even though there is an admitted over production of oil for the market, the operators keep on drilling to hold their leases from the State. The only way they get around it is by curtailment of production and wasting natural gas on desert air.

And to end this little *agitka* upon a note of romance, the operators would have you know that Hobbs is not only a fine example of industrialism under a touted system of universal democracy, but also a haven for a disinherited Persian prince.

Prince Darab Mirza from a long line of knocked down aristocrats claims the same Alma Mater as the Prince of Wales, and he would have you know that they were damn good buddies. He is characterized as "of large stature, weighing about 190 pounds, and built like an American football hero. He has a smooth olive complexion, greyblue eyes, sleek black hair and his large hands are neatly manicured at the end of the day's work." For you must not forget that, although he is forced to soil his hands with labor due to the ingratitude of his former subjects, he is still a *Prince*.

## JOB

*It is not a tiger in the wilderness*

*And your emotions dear or zebras.*

*No, you are not a herd of defenseless animals.*

*Whoever heard of the richest city being called a jungle?*

*It is not even an elastic cat*

*And your emotions furry mice or stiff-tailed rats.*

*No, you are not a judge to say something.*

*Whoever heard of the richest city being called a rat-infested ruin?*

*O the killing is done less harmlessly than that.*

*If there was any obvious killing police would arrive,*

*And there would be a judge to say something.*

*This is a wonderfully civilized city.*

*It is a god you'll never know where to find.*

*You'll pray but it sure will never find you.*

*Though your arms daily rise in hope and fall in despair*

*There is fatigue to hammer gently your eyelids down for you.*

LEON SRABIAN HERALD.

## A GOOD LANDLORD

(An Interview With Our Janitress)

By Dorothy Day

She is brown-eyed and cross-eyed, the little janitress in a tenement on East Thirteenth Street. And she is very young, painfully, pathetically young. But thank God she has a job! That's what she says. She has only had the job for the last few weeks. Before that she and her husband were only janitor's helpers. Now she and her husband do it all themselves. They are the whole thing. They haven't any one to boss them, and they haven't any one to boss. This is how it came about.

Just three weeks ago Bessie was sweeping out the hallways when her labor pains began. She had one kid already, lying in a crib in the little dark apartment down in the basement. That one was only a baby too, just a year old. She said to the janitress,

"Gee, missus, I feel my pains on me."

"Fer Crapes sake, Bessie, quit your stalling. If you don't want to do the work, my husband can get plenty as would want it. Git to the dumb waiters and start taking off the garbage!"

But Bessie was doubtful up. She couldn't. She could hardly move, could only hang on to the broom and lean against the walls of the narrow halls.

She leaned there for a moment, her funny little grotesque body pressed close against the wall, trying to shrink. "But gee, I was big," she said. "I took up most the hall. I was trying to get out of the way so one of the tenants could get by. 'What's the matter, Bessie?' she says."

"It's my pains," I told her. And Missus, the janitor's wife says to get down and empty the garbage. The lady told me to get to bed but by then the pains had left and I could finish the hall. Maybe only a false alarm, I said. And then they started again. You know how they come. First minute you feel fine. I was all ready to get down to the basement and dump the garbage. Then another pain.

"But I thought,—they're pretty far apart. Maybe I'll have time to tend to one dumb waiter while James does another. There's three you know, one for each building. This is three buildings, not one."

"So I went down stairs, James," I said, "My pains started." "Jeez, Bessie, get to bed, can't you?" he kept saying.

"But we just got the job a few months ago, and him out of work for six months. I felt I had to keep going. I'll help you with this dumb waiter," I said.

"So he took off the heavy cans and I took the paper. And I'm not saying anything against the people in the house, but gee, they're in a hurry. We have to keep the dumb waiters locked, padlocked all day, or else they throw their packages of garbage right down the six stories to the basement. And some times when we used to open the door we'd almost be buried in it. So now we keep them locked. But then at five and six when we're emptying, people are all in a rush, getting the old man's supper and all, and do they yell down at us!"

"We worked like hell, but sometimes I had to sit on the floor with my knees up to my chin. It was something fierce."

"And then a big rat, a foot long, jumped out of the dumb waiter. I screamed. It seemed to start the pains all the faster. I couldn't help but moan. Everything all at once was too much."

"And there was Jenny, lying in the crib in the apartment, yelling her head off for supper, and me moaning on the floor and Jim cursing and the sweat pouring in his eyes."

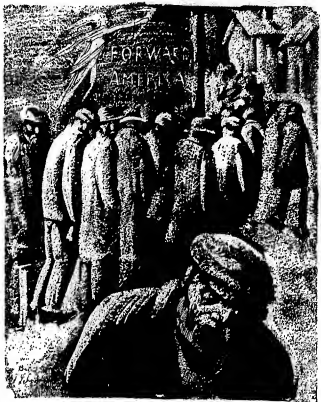
"It got so they could hear me up the shaft. They were all yelling what's the matter."

"And of course she had to go have her baby right now," I heard the missus saying.

"So Jim, he was just— He just picked me up and took me into the apartment and put me to bed. He left everything, and put me into bed and ran out and got the woman to come in—we couldn't afford a doctor,—and then he got Jenny's supper, and I seen him crying in the kitchen. Gee, it was hell."

"Well, we was freed. They came down and told us so, before the kid came, that was."

"But there's decent people in the house. They heard about it and they called up the owner—he lives in Brooklyn—and he come



BREADLINE

A. Lebedinsky

over the next day and come in and seen me and the new kid. He fired the old lady, he told me, and made a present of the job to me and my husband."

Bessie's apartment is one of twelve basement apartments. There are three buildings, with four apartments on a floor, and the buildings are six stories high. Bessie's work is to clean the halls which are tiled, sweep the side walks front and back, help her husband with the garbage and trash from seventy-two apartments, show the empty apartments, and collect the rents.

She hasn't much time for her own rooms. They are sparsely furnished fortunately, so the rooms seem bigger than they are. It means more room for little Jenny to crawl a-pe-fashon, when she is released from her crib, from one dark end to the other. Bessie has to shut her up alone with the tiny new arrival most of the time when she is working around the house. Jenny is precocious and if she had her way, she'd climb up and fall down the stairs in an effort to keep up with her busy mother.

When I saw Bessie it was Sunday morning. She was proudly showing her apartments, gallantly telling their virtues—"The rats aint bad upstairs, but my husband killed eleven down in the kitchen one night. He just sat by the cupboard under the sink and hit them on the head with a club as they came out. But now we got a big black cat that goes after them. She's wonderful at killing them . . . Y' see how nice they're all painted up. Not a bug in the house when you keep them painted this way. It makes it lighter too. Steam heat and hot water and bath,—all for forty dollars a month. You can't do better."

Down in her own dark little unpainted kitchen where the breakfast dishes were still unwashed and dirty clothes were piled by the tub—"A nice white tub, see?"—she showed me the children.

Jenny had been crying till there were lavender shadows under her blue eyes. She lay in the crib and looked at us resentfully. The baby, Marie, a pale basement baby, slept heavily in the middle of a double bed in the living room. "She hasn't been out yet. She's only three weeks old. But you ought to pass by this afternoon and see how she looks. She'll be out in her carriage then."

So later in the afternoon, I passed along the high barracks of seventy-two apartments where Bessie, three weeks after her confinement, is up and toiling. Little Jennie, in a pink silk dress,

# SALUTE! (To a Chinese Revolutionist)

by Reginald Pedrosa

From the depths of the centuries,  
tumultuous and wild,  
my exaltation arises for you  
in whose slanting eyes I have read,  
as on a page from the *Iliad* of liberty,  
your Himalayan epics.

Rising from the long years of humiliation,  
I, like you, am a yellow man.  
Perhaps we had for grandparents  
the same old mandarin, stout and sickly,  
enervated by the nirvana of opium  
in the long black nights of the past—  
or maybe happier fathers,  
peasants, planters of rice  
off there in the valleys of the  
Yang-Tse-Kiang.

Although you come to me now  
in the clothes of a European,  
your skin is mongolian.  
Exotic your monosyllabic tongue,  
and your expression calls up—  
a little barbarous behind the smile—  
that of the warriors of Genghis Khan—  
a mask Europe is afraid of,  
and for which the Yankee North  
lies white in ambush.

It was altogether necessary that you come—  
with your woes of the past  
your forces of the present,  
your hopes of the future,  
and your fighting impulse  
breaking the chains of oppressed brothers—  
that I might awaken from my opium sleep  
to enter the new dawn with you,  
that I might see your sword—  
not the sword of a conqueror  
but the sword of a liberator—  
rip open the black sky of a hundred subject cities  
with the sunrise flash  
of liberating flame.

Blood of your blood,  
I live feverishly  
the strong gestures of your deep tragedy,  
for we are doubly linked  
by the bonds of race and restless dreams.  
And you have awakened in me all there is of Asia  
lulled to sleep by Panamericanism.  
Besides, I come from afar in marriage with Africa—  
two great humiliated lands, conquered . . .  
My destiny is sadder than yours

and spotlessly clean white shoes, was trying to escape from the  
arms of one of the other tenants. Marie lay in her carriage sleeping  
still, but she did not look quite so ghastly since her unnaturally  
heavy crop of hair which accentuated the pallor of her face was  
covered by a little lace bonnet. Over her was spread a silk em-  
broidered coverlet, surmounted by a vast pink satin bow.

Bessie, her hands still wet and soapy from some inside work,  
stood there in a dirty white overall, contemplating with pride the  
two little ones she was helping support by scrubbing out who  
knows how many square feet of tiled hall, and emptying untold  
quantities of garbage.

But after all she has a job. A swell job! Sixty apartments.  
Sixty pails of garbage. Sixty boxes and baskets of trash. And  
it was a good kind landlord who took the job which used to be  
handled by four and handed it over to Bessie and her husband.

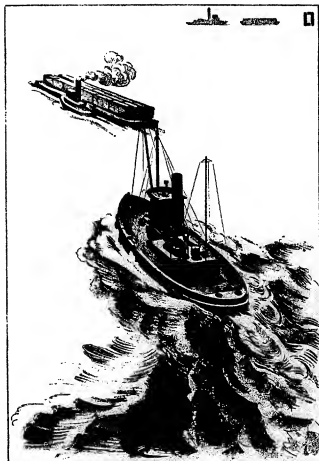
because this southern world  
beneath whose sun Poe grown,  
is crushed by imperialism.

Out of your ancestral instincts,  
your sleeping occult forces,  
freedom!  
Although the gold of Europe  
and the hateful menace of the barbarous North  
comes toward you,  
freedom!

The power of your ancient race  
rises virile and strong.  
From the futile dreams of conquered landscapes  
and the dreariness of death-dealing opium  
and the useless stasis of languid philosophies—  
let the clamor of war explode!  
Fight against the cultures  
that are tearing at your entrails,  
those foreign rampires sucking away your rights  
in this long deceptive night called civilization.

From the hunger of the past  
let loose the place of the future.  
In rebellious flight toward human justice  
sweep through the starry oceans of space  
in new spirals of faith.  
In your more human, more universal idealism—  
let the vibrant motor of our times be heard,  
until that dawn comes when the cables on the masts of the Andes  
hum in the wind of new postulates  
sending forward the great ship  
of the American Revolution.

Adapted from the Spanish by LANGSTON HUGHES.



TUGS

Louis Lozowick

ED FALKOWSKI

# IN A SOVIET MINING TOWN

GORLOVKA SILHOUETTE

July 24.—Dawn was cracking out of the east when our train wheezed and stoppered at the station. The platform was crowded with people hunched with baskets and bags. Workers on their way to distant resorts. Many are industrial nomads, floating from job to job, forever disoriented. The discipline of heavy industry is hard on the peasants.

Accordions drifted out of the black throng. We grab our luggage, dive for the tea-room. Maybe by chance we will get a glass of Tebal. But the samovar is cold; behind a counter of empty cases stands a sleep-worn clerk whose sole purpose seems to be to assure us we can't get anything to eat at this ungodly hour. "Nitchevo, nitchevo!" he shakes his head, irritated at our insistence.

Outside, the dark lifts. In the distance the Gorlovka mine silhouettes itself against the sky. Massive water-towers, smokestacks rising out of a welter of buildings. A pyramid of eum dominating the entire scene, a scraper-line reaching its summit. Evidently it has not stopped growing.

The colony is some distance away. We must take a droschky. A bearded izvoshchik barsel inside a furcoat offers to take us for three rubles to the "House of Arrival". We jump into his frail vehicle. The lean horse snorts, trots slowly down the dusty road. A few minutes brings us beside the mine. Electric lights flicker through shifting clouds of steam. Silent and gloomy the mine broods its own thoughts. Seems to realize the meaning of the time for Soviet Russia. That the entire industrialization program depends, in the last analysis, on the ability of the coal industry to grow fast enough to support it.

Far out in the distance the coke-oven Stalina sends red tongues of flame against the skyline. Its shaft-towers are lost in columns of smoke. Yes, things are being done here. The silent horizon of the coal-diggers.

Indeed, it seems one must be heroic to live here at all. Moscow is here a blurry voice over the radio. Leningrad, a concert at 7 P. M.—a place where troupes of actors frequently hale front, on circuits through coal regions. Far from any world of culture and music and even good food, here is a world revolving in shifts, its achievements measured in tonnage. Here is the very heart of the 5-year Plan. The black vitalities that feed dynamo and create power-currents that are lifting Russia rapidly to the status of a first world-power, are dug here underneath this quiet, sun-scorched steppe-land.

## PALACE OF LABOR

July 26.—Here is a real pioneer country. A land pregnant with cities about to be born. Another Ruhr country, smoke-veiled empire of toiling shafts and flaming mills. But not with the bitterness and ache that afflicts the Ruhr lands of Capitalism. Slaves herded into dismal barracks wearing out their lives in hopeless drudgery, driven by hunger and fear. Cities of poverty and hate, alleys of black curses and secret dreams of vengeance. Houses that become pens for half-starved beasts of labor. . . .

These nightmares belong to the capitalist world. Here is a world of comrades building for comrades. A world of hand-in-hand, heart-to-heart. A brother-world. This is our mine here, its engines breathing rhythmically through the silent hours of night. Our shaft it is grimly dropping its eages down the drafty doom of the mine. Even our eum bank, growing ever bigger, barren monument that it is, yet it tells of unseen toil down wood-smelling gangways, by dim yellow lamps. For Soviet

miners must use only what former capitalists have left them. Tools and instruments often antique.

But there is Dvoretz Truda—Palace of Labor. Center of all local social life. At night its large bulbs beckon to the crowds. A flower-fragrant garden surrounds it, a fountain playing in the center. Here the worker finds rest and recreation for his free moments. Books, music, theatres, food. Program ever-changing. Lovers promenade along its perfume-drenched walks; old mine-scarred veterans of the pits come here with their wives to enjoy an hour of summer cool.

The Dvoretz Truda stands out like a promise amid the ancient huts that still house some of the miners in Gorlovka. Beside it will be built the new socialist city. With trolley cars, theatres, restaurants,—it will clothe the lives of the miners with new meaning. Life here is still crude. But everywhere the new life cuts its tresh through the skin of the old. Hundreds of new houses have already been built. Construction goes on apace. A whirlwind of building. Greater than the blood-flecks spotting the pages of history are the new battles being fought on Soviet soil today. Battles of construction, of creation. Even a blind Homer could immortalize the destructive genius of the ancient gods. But blinder than Homer are those who fail to see in Soviet Russia today an embodiment of the constructive genius of the free proletariat!

## ARTEMA MINE

August 6.—In the southern Caucasus country. Heart of Soviet Anarchic. The ripple of houses on the bumpy hill is Schachty. A rusty old place on whose fringes mine-shafts loom on iron hunches, spinning their wheels. Its bulbous-domed church is in the throes of demolition; a large modern hospital occupies its northern side. And a factory kitchen where workers go for their meals.

The mining industry is still young here. True, even before the war production limped along, but on no modern scale. The sudden conversion of old mines into modern ones is no light undertaking. Not only is mechanization costly, but experienced miners are hard to find. Fresh chaps breeze in, try the underground work. Mines don't appeal to them. They travel further. Mines suffer for lack of proper attention. Production is not what it could be. The problem is earnest.

Shaft Artema is mechanized since 1929. Electric haulage, model gangways; a modern breaker where women slate-pickers sit for 8 hours over bumper-chutes, weaving rock out of the 'streaming coal.

The colony belonged once to a wealthy cossack. A man of culture evidently, judging by the immense school he built for the miners' children, but the conditions of his workers interested him little. The cheerless barracks he built for them still stand, dreary symbols of his vanished power. "These are capitalist houses," a miner said to me. "And there are our houses," he pointed to the new modern houses, streetsful of them. "We can see here the meaning of the 5-year plan for us!"

## SHIFT CHANGES

Aug. 7.—Night is a hum of motors, and day-break becomes a hooting of the colliery whistle. Like a giant dragon-moan it's surly basso reaches over the houses of the colony. Change of shift. In gray twilight miners leave their houses, take their lamps and towels, go toward the mine. Early usually that they



MINE TIMBERMAN

Walter Quirt

may grab a snack of something in the shaft restaurant before the descent.

Here is the revolution in terms of pick and shovel. Leninism becomes a mammoth colliery sighing in the morning fog, amid glow of electric lamps, and cinder-spitting engines. Down the coal mine a trainload of cars speeds by. Toward Stalingrad, Dneprostroi, Autostroi, Selmastrai. "Give us coal!" crackle telegraph wires. In editorial bureaus the coal situation is given a serious once-over. Great new factories with empty furnaces, their cold bellies shrieking for black vitamins!

The miners hack up yesterday's dust out of their lungs. Spit out smeary black gobs as they walk. In passageways to the shaft, shift meets shift, as the cage pumps out wet, dirt-smeared men with quenched lamps and sends down clean-faced men with burning lamps.

Another shift . . .

#### WE WORK

Aug. 10.—Our seam is barely over a meter high. We work crouching. The roof-rock above us gleams with sweat. By dim yellow lights we work. One of us tears with iron bar at the seam, ripping out huge chunks of coal. Another splits it with hammer and chisel. The rest load it into a crude conveyor which transports it to the car.

The place is hot and muggy. Our bodies are slippery with sweat; it bites into the eyes; its salty taste gets into our mouths. But we go on without pause. The Soviet miner does not even pause at his work for a sandwich, as miners do everywhere else. For him a shift means so many hours of uninterrupted toil.

We shovel, we throw immense lumps into the conveyor. We stand up a set of timber to hold the rock safely above us. Once in a while, when the conveyor is held up, we stop to catch our breath. It is hard and earnest toil. The answer of the Soviet miner to the challenge of the 5-year plan.

"For us life won't mean much," says my comrade, wiping the sweat out of his eyelids, "Only hard work and sometimes even not enough to eat. But our children will have it good. That'll be our monument! They will say then that at least we weren't selfish. That we really did build for them."

The shift is over. The pains of hard labor creep into one's muscles. Hours of crouching has ignited the spine. Feels like a red-hot poker under one's damp shirt. The wrists ache, and the thighs complain. After the shift, one crawls for 20 minutes up an infinite series of steep manways to reach the main gangway where the cool breezes are a welcome relief. Here is the station where the electric train will soon drive up with passenger wagons, to haul us to the shaft-bottom.

The dripping cage restores us to the August world, its night sky glorious with stars. The steps exude heat. It is once more summer in a universe of changing nights and days. One carries one's aching muscles bedward.

But of the little dip in the steppe, Artemstroi stands brilliant against the darkness. Two years ago a piece of steppe. Today a mighty electric station, supplying current for a radius of 400 miles. Something done there, by jove! . . . Worth all the ache and suffering put into it finally to achieve it . . . the 5-year plan . . .

And one realizes the glory and the wonder of it. The beauty and the vastness of it. Never before in the world's history has such a thing happened. In olden days the masters glorified themselves in sphinxes and mausoleums. But here is a world whose monuments are electric stations and mine-shafts and tractor-factories. Whose purpose is not to build a house of death, but a universe of life and love. A world of true proletarian comradeship. One ignores the ache in one's muscles, the heat in his spine—for tomorrow another shift . . .

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Translated by Bayard Taylor

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# MOVIES

By HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN

*Storm over Asia, a Majestic Production, Shown at the Cameo Theatre, New York.*

*Lincoln, a United Artists Production, Shown at the Central Theatre, New York.*

In the first chapter of the history of the art of the motion picture, the name of David Wark Griffith will be important. He was the first to suspect the scope of the new medium, and, although the new devices he introduced were conceived by him solely as expedients, they have been utilized by other succeeding directors as experiences. These directors are mainly the Soviet artists. The American movie has not extended in the least the work of Griffith and his early contemporaries. Pudovkin, among the Soviet directors, has developed the early American film to its ultimate. *Storm over Asia* is the culmination of the romantic technique of the Griffith-Western period. As a culmination or perfection of the primitive film it is a reflection upon the inertia of the American movie. As a perfection of the film of muscular impact, it is still unassisted in method to the pre-found material of the Soviet kino.

I first saw *Storm over Asia*, intact, in Amsterdam. I have seen it three times since. My reaction has been always the same. An exciting film, which beats any American audience-film. It makes the boasted dramatic technique of America appear a school-boy's exercise. Griffith's *Lincoln*, in comparison with it, is a meek idyll. Yet both Pudovkin and Griffith suffer commonly from a sentimentalism which expresses itself in bad "figures of speech" and over-simplification. The theme in Pudovkin's film is tremendous: imperialism. In Griffith's film it is trivial: the Lincoln of the least of the vagaries—a Lincoln that any child beyond the fifth grade in school would dismiss. Pudovkin, like every Soviet director, had a social theme to convert into a dramatic instance. Griffith had a sentimental figure out of a fairy-tale. In the particularization of the theme, the film itself, Pudovkin selected frequent symbols below the level of the theme, and stressed too ardently the personalities and their narrative, so that very often the theme—the implication of the narrative—is not perceivable in the occurrences. That is one reason the film, while possessing strength, physical strength, lacks poignancy, penetration. *China Express*, in contrast, while not grand, remains a more poignant, permanently appealing, film upon imperialism.

In Griffith we see what Pudovkin might have been in America 1910-30. In Pudovkin we see what Griffith might have been in the U.S.S.R. Griffith, possessing social sympathies, expressed these in platitudes on "tolerance" and "free speech," and read his American history in the terms of *The Chinaman* (the Ku Klux Klan and the Confederacy, in whose army his father was a General), and in the terms of the crudest Lincoln myths. His films in the past have been innocuous idylls and grandiose panoramas, allowing him distinction for his instincts of composition. *Lincoln* has everything of the sentimentally idyllic, and nothing of the grandiose. It is an unattractive drinkwater chronicle-play on the screen, despite Stephen Vincent Benet's hand in the scenario (why "despite"?). The fact that it chews tears is rather against it than for it. The pathos of a tremendous social occurrence should not be refined or lachrymose, but revealing. The social occurrence seldom gets a chance here. Slogans of spurious manufacture explain the motivations of the Civil War.

The legend of a people may offer as much substance for revelation as the actual unmythical source. But such revelation demands a critical understanding which alone assumes a surpassing of the elementary myth. Griffith possesses no critical penetration. The nostalgia of a desecrated aristocracy seeps through the film: in the silly pretense with music to toleration of the black (what an silly hypocrisy after *The Birth of a Nation*); in the tiresome reiteration of the virtues of the protagonists—Lee especially, etc. Griffith, still bound to the conceptions of refinement and good taste (a tradition set by him by now noxious in the American movie), thwarted a player of more eloquent talents, Walter Huston. And



Phil Bard

"Those movie boys sure make great recruiting pictures!"

the innovator of the silent-film contributes nothing to the improvement of the garrulous. The simple-minded spectator will carry away with him an amiable sentiment toward North and South, emancipation and slavery, and the Union forever! The close, with Lincoln's monument, is a palpable bid for patriotism. Who says the American movie is against propaganda?

A last tribute: to Soviet photography in *Storm over Asia*, as against the sickening "artificialness" of the Menzies-Struss collaboration in *Lincoln*. To the authentic types (they become prototypes) in *Storm over Asia* as against the dubious histrions of *Lincoln* (notice Abe Lincoln's lip-tug). The selection of types among non-professionals has taught the Soviet director to select the authentic even among professionals.

These two films call forth speculations upon the nature of propaganda, which coincides with the nature of art. *Storm over Asia* asks: "How much immediate impact, how much after-effect? Cannot what drives in too forcefully, just as easily drive out? Is not propaganda the accumulation of what is implied?" *Lincoln* says: "The less critical the propaganda, the less valid art it demands."

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# BOOKS

Reviewed by Robert Evans, Walt Carmon, Edward Newhouse

*Morgan the Magnificent: the life of J. Pierpont Morgan (1837-1913).* By John K. Winkler. Vanguard Press. \$3.50.

When Wilhelm Hohenzollern was still Kaiser, it was the custom for journalists and professors to describe him as a great mind; not merely a great statesman, a great military leader, and a great prince; but one of those universal minds that makes the Renaissance so attractive; a mind equally at home in art and science, music and philosophy, literature and anthropology; a mind fit not only to govern an empire but even to edit anthologies on sex and civilization. Came the war and the German revolution, and Wilhelm Hohenzollern found himself without a crown, and lo and behold, the king was naked. Everybody could now see that Herr Hohenzollern was not only no genius, but didn't even have the brains of a police commissioner. Similarly, if one goes back over the records, it appears that at one time General Ludendorff was also credited with "genius," not merely with military skill, but with a colossal intellect; and now that his power is gone, even a tabloid reporter can see that the man is an ass, and at moments even a lunatic.

It seems, then, that prestige is an attribute of power. In any given society the governing class sets the prevailing standards. Scribes and scribblers are educated to believe in the human superiority of the rulers; and if the literary sycophants turn cynical and no longer believe that the kings and generals are gods, they continue to say so anyway. Yellow glittering precious gold, as Shakespeare long ago observed, makes black white, foul fair, wrong right, base noble, old young, coward valiant. Nothing succeeds like success; and in capitalist society, where success is measured by money, one can rest assured that the laurels of genius will be placed upon the brow of him who has succeeded, by hook or crook, in laying up for himself treasures not in heaven but on earth.

Money-worship is so intense in this country that in the past few years there has grown up the cult of the racketeer. The average newspaper reader may know nothing about Einstein, Freud or Lenin; but he knows all that the reporters can gather about Rothstein, Al Capone and Legs Diamond. The racketeer has been the hero of plays and movies, the subject of novels; and the general impression created by the bards who celebrate him is that he has "brains." In the bourgeois press when William Z. Foster is not a "menace," he is a utopian, a wild-eyed dreamer; but Louis Beretti, if you please, is a clever and charming fellow. And if this is true of the little racketeers, those who through force and fraud can hope at best to clean up one or two million berries, what of the big shots, the barons and kings of American industry and finance who govern the country, who play with senators and presidents the way Al Capone plays with police captains and aldermen, who battled for railways the way bootleggers shoot it out for beer territories?

J. P. Morgan was anti-social. The mainspring of his life was greed. The embodiment of egotism and naked will, he knew nothing and cared less about the millions of people whose lives his operations affected, and whose toil produced the steel, the coal and the railways with which he built up a power as absolute as a feudal lord's and a thousand times more predatory. Twenty-five years ago, in the muck-raking days, the indignant writers of the lower middle classes, smarting under the agonies inflicted by the recurring crises of capitalist economy, used to attack Morgan as a pirate. Today things are different. The democratic illusion is dead. The middle classes are no longer indignant. The House of Morgan reigns supreme not only over the United States but over Europe and Latin America as well; and its heroic founder, once attacked as a buccaner of industry and finance, is the subject of a biographical fall of adulation and extravagant praise.

In this biography Morgan's success is attributed to his mathematical "genius," to his "vision and surpassing imagination," "incredible audacity," "sublime self-confidence," "unqualified courage," "amazing virility of mind and body," an "overwhelming

personality, and so on and on for pages. Yellow glittering precious gold . . . One wonders how magnificent Morgan would have been without his millions; for outside his capacity for putting it over on equally predatory rivals, even the bare and limited facts set down by his biographer reveal a callous unimaginative egoist without an iota of social insight.

However, whether or not Morgan was a "mathematical genius," his history is interesting and important because it is part and parcel of the history of American industrial and financial development. Hence the biography under review is devoted chiefly to the railway history, the financial panic of 1894, the steel trust, the railway history, the financial panic of 1894, the steel trust, the railway history of 1907. This is set forth in a style which even bourgeois historians have discarded long ago. History is no longer written as the history of dynasties; yet this life of Morgan is written as if the formation of trusts, syndicates and railways were entirely a matter of a few "titans." The biographer has been infected by the social snobism of his subject, for whom nobody except himself, his allies and his rivals existed. In the story of the steel trust there are no steel workers, in the railway story there are no railway workers; these "geniuses" and "titans" and "gods" make their money out of thin air.

Yet even this limited story of a great capitalist is fascinating and instructive; for in it we see that the money-masters do issue orders to presidents of the United States, often in person, as in the case of Cleveland; that law and order are for the poor but not for the rich, who can use violence and fraud with impunity; that religion is the opium of the people, for though the world's leading banker can be as superstitious as a servant girl he can also violate the moral code of his church with impunity, flaunting his mistresses under the very noses of bishops he subsidizes. We can see, summarized in an individual, the brutal nature of the capitalist class; its greed for money, its contempt for the masses it exploits, for the politicians who serve it; its gross disregard of the law and morals it imposes on the society it governs; above all, we can see, vividly depicted, how the ruling class seized power through force and fraud. It is a good book to read when eight million unemployed tramp the streets looking for work; and a good story to remember when the police club as "criminals" jobless workers demanding work or wages.

ROBERT EVANS.

## Away from Harlem

*Not Without Laughter*, by Langston Hughes. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

*Not Without Laughter*, first novel by Langston Hughes, is a definite contribution to both Negro and proletarian literature in America.

Coming at this moment, however, it takes on added importance: it is the first definite break with the vicious Harlem tradition of Negro literature sponsored by Van Vechten and illustrated by Covarrubias.

This literary tradition has vulgarized and burlesqued the Negro as have the stage and the movies. It has seduced talented young Negro writers with easy money and quick recognition to be found in a synthetic cabaret bawdiness which is but a libel on 12 million American Negroes, most of them wage slaves. Even Taylor Gordon, artist and genial human, makes his autobiography *Born To Be* a series of off-color episodes moralized into: "Don't sit on the green grass nude if you don't know your botany." He can thank Van Vechten.

And our own Claude McKay in *Home To Harlem* and *Banjo*, despite all their virtues, makes them definite products of this travesty on Negro life.

It is not surprising that genuine talent should have sacrificed artistic honesty, race pride and even class consciousness. Like the Negro worker, the Negro writer has been Jim-Crowed un-

mercifully. Honest novels of Negro life with their tragedy and bitterness were as unobscured as the novels of the white worker. For years, this perverted literature has been practically the only opening in the literary field for the Negro writer. He has been allowed only to portend and clown at the literary bawdy-house.

That Langston Hughes in his first book has had the courage to break with this tradition is evidence of his artistic honesty and a proletarian experience that has served him well. Hughes has been a seaman, porter, busboy and student.

As far back as 1921, I recall how enthusiastically we discussed his first poems then appearing in the *Workers Monthly*. They appeared later in the fine little collection *Poems For Workers* edited by Manuel Gomez, who was also editor of the *Workers Monthly* at the time. The poems were spirited, bitter poems of a proletarian and the work of a sensitive, competent literary craftsman.

In later poems in the *New Masses* and the following two books of verse: *The Weary Blues* and *Old Clothes To The Jew* the same note was dominant. But here it was already heavily laden with the scent of the vicious Van Vechten patronage which Hughes still acknowledges.

In *Not Without Laughter*, the break with the Harlem tradition is not complete. But the novel is far beyond *Home To Harlem*, for instance. While McKay grossly daubs his canvas for the well paying punch, I see in Hughes, closer to proletarian reality, gives us a vivid picture of a Negro working class family in Midwest America.

One is struck immediately with the remarkable similarity to Agnes Smedley's *Daughter of Earth*, published last year. The kinship is a proletarian class kinship; the life is one that both black and white workers share in common.

The Indian father in Agnes Smedley's novel is not unlike the Negro, Jimbo, of *Not Without Laughter*; a transient worker, restless, always moving. "Jimbo was always going . . . what was there in Stanton anyhow for a young colored fellow except to dig sewer-ditches for a few cents an hour or maybe porter around a store for seven dollars a week."

But where the Indian drowns his unrest in drink, the Negro Jimbo plays a guitar and sings blues, shouts and jingles: the songs he learned as a wharf hand, railroad worker and porter in Natchez, Shreveport and Dallas. Some of these are folk-songs he learned in the pine woods of Arkansas from the lumber camp workers, earthy songs "desperate and dirty like the weary roads where they were sung."

*Daughter of Earth* took its bias from the bitterness of a woman. *Not Without Laughter* is steeped in the hatred of an oppressed race. Both are marred as class novels in this way. Yet both are proletarian as well. Agnes Smedley's story was a bitter, gray story. *Not Without Laughter* also gray, has brilliant gay tones of laughter, dance and music. Some of its passages are unmistakably the work of a poet.

The Negro worker feels the heel of race oppression. He is "Nigger" to his white playmates in childhood. He is discriminated against in grade and high school. Later in life he is restricted to miserably paid mental labor. The white boss exploits him and his white misguided fellow-worker often discriminates against him on the job and in the trade union. Langston Hughes lets us see how bitterly the Negro worker feels this. It is not strange that class issues are overlooked by race feeling.

Harriet, hardheaded fawning girl who turns prostitute and later becomes a successful blues singer is told by her mother that her sister must guard her health. "What for," she asks, "to spend her life in Mrs. Rice's kitchen?"

And Harriet voices all the bitterness against a white religion which helps to oppress such a great part of her race: "Your old Jesus is white" she says, "He's white and stiff and don't like niggers!"

Discrimination, lynching, exploitation, the proletarian Negro feels as a class. But his oppressor is almost always white and the bitterness and hatred is misdirected at the white race as a whole.

*Not Without Laughter* is primarily a race novel. It concludes in a misty pointless fashion. There is no clear class consciousness nor revolutionary spirit which distinguished some of Hughes' early poems. But under its black skin, there is red proletarian blood running through it. With all its faults, *Not Without Laughter* goes far beyond Harlem. It is our novel.

WALT CARMON.



## ON MY WAY

by Art Young

The casual autobiography in comment and anecdote, cartoon and confession of America's trenchant social caricaturist—a well known figure in American life.

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## Mental Dynamite

*Modern Farming—Soviet Style*, by Anna Louise Strong; *War in the Far East*, by Henry Hall; *Chemical Warfare*, by Donald A. Cameron; *Work or Wages*, by Grace M. Burnside; *The Struggle of the Marine Workers*, by N. Sparks. Prepared under the direction of the Labor Research Association. Published by International Pamphlets. 10c each. No. 5-20c.

In case I had an uncle who owned a diamond mine in South Africa and in case he kicked off one of these days and if he left me a cold million, my first ten grand would go to the distribution of these pamphlets. They click not only as fine pieces of propaganda but also as factual and well-digested analyses. So far as possible the authors have successfully dispensed with technical terms and have largely overcome the temptation to substitute theoretical phrasology for theoretical maturity. Correct "line," plus conscientious research, plus unpretentious style have combined to produce this first broadside of a series that promises to revive old pamphleteering days.

Unintentionally perhaps, the five pamphlets could almost be combined into a book to represent the communist view of the international situation. *Work or Wages* describes an aspect of capitalism's great internal contradictions, unemployment. The appropriate theoretical background is embellished by well-chosen illustrations and brought up to date by the description of the present American situation to which most of the pamphlet is devoted. "Not only have waves of unemployment become more frequent, but the number of workers permanently unemployed increases year by year. With each new invention, each introduction of 'efficiency' methods, the number of actual jobs becomes fewer. A permanent and constantly growing army of the unemployed is the outstanding characteristic of unemployment today."

*The Struggle of the Marine Workers* portrays the conditions of existence of a section of the working class particularly affected by unemployment. It is an effective debunking of the myths of "the suffering shipping industry" and "the romance of the sea." The inevitable mechanical improvements, Diesels, pulverized coal, etc. are taking their toll in the marine industry and transforming the life of the jolly tar of yore into the precarious existence of the unskilled worker of today.

In contrast to all this we have Anna Louise Strong's inspiring description of work in the Soviet Union in *Modern Farming—Soviet Style*. No book gives you the authentic feel and tang of New Russia as well as this brilliant little pamphlet. The dazzling potentialities of a cooperative commonwealth . . . shock brigades from the city factory overhauling tractors in distant villages . . . shock brigades camping to the music of the balalaika . . . liquidating the kulaks . . . dizziness from success . . . the Socialist Farm City of Filipova building brick-kilns and a cheese factory and a central laundry and power, water, sewerage systems . . . "The drudgery of the isolated farm, snow-bound, uncultured, will vanish forever."

But looming all around is the sinister shadow of the old society. The body of capitalism, bloated by internal contradictions, suffocating with overproduction, seeks the desperate laxative of war. Minor doses, so well set forth in *War in the Far East* will no longer suffice. That capitalism is preparing for the great drive is amply proved in *Chemical Warfare*. Its author quotes the former Chief of the Planning Division of the U. S. Army Chemical Warfare Service:

"According to the plans which are now fairly well completed, at the very hour, or possibly a few hours before, America next declares war, tersely worded official telegrams will automatically go forward from Washington to several hundred chemical plants scattered throughout the East and Middle West. In substance, the messages will say:—'Go ahead,' and the innumerable war contracts which are being signed in these quiet times of peace will immediately become effective."

But if by that hour the purpose of these pamphlets will have been realized, the Chemical Workers Union will wire "Stop!", the Marine Workers Union will send forth the word "Down Tools!" and the Trade Union Unity League will unfurl the banner "Strike!" And there will be no more Struggles of the Marine Workers or Chemical Warfare or War in the Far East. There will be Work or Wages and Modern Farming—Soviet Style.

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# WORKERS' ART

A monthly department for reports and discussion of Workers' Cultural Activities.

## Jewish Workers' Theatre

Editors of *New Masses*:

The "Artes" Studio (Workers' Theatrical Alliance) begins the coming season with a new play *Jim Kopperkop* by the Soviet playwright Gordimer, at the Princess Theatre in New York, 30 St. and Broadway, on October 3. This will be the first American presentation.

The production, in Jewish, is under the direction of Benno Schneider. The music and sound effects are the work of Lahn Adolmanyan of the John Reed Club. Benjamin Zemach is dance director.

The play itself is a phantasy on American capitalism, satirical, stylized, and with pathos and power.

The group presenting the play had a most successful season last year. Some of its plays ran for weeks. This first play of the new season, will, a larger cast than any heretofore, and its novel stage effects, is sure to attract an even wider audience.

The Artes Studio, with the benefit of the experience gained in the past, now seems an assured, permanent group and a definite contribution to a Workers' Culture in the language field. Future productions and activities will be brought to the attention of *New Masses* readers.

Fraternally,

New York, N. Y.

ARTEF PRESS COMMITTEE.

## Greetings from Soviet 'Blue Blouse'

Comrades in America:

The Moscow Theatre "Blue Blouse" sends greetings to all proletarian drama groups in America. We will gladly exchange dramatic material and notes on stage experiments.

We are sending copies of our magazine *Forms of Club Spectacles* for your attention. In addition to this, we are sending in a few days, a number of short plays and sketches, which one of your writers, Joshua Kaniz, is selecting at the present time. Since some of these are of local interest for the Soviet spectator, a certain amount of revising will have to be done to make them suitable for American workers' clubs. We are also sending you additional information on our work and photographs of our theatre and productions.

If American workers groups are interested in our methods we will gladly send any information requested and will keep you advised of any new items of interest. We want workers groups to write us on any matters of the theatre.

We want also the plays of Paul Peters which were mentioned by Michael Gold in the May issue of *New Masses*. Advise us of any other material of definite working class nature.

We have been receiving copies of *New Masses* for which we thank you. It is interesting and most valuable to the workers movement of the world. Through this publication, allow us again, to send greetings to all American workers from our workers of the "Blue Blouse."

Fraternally,

Moscow, U.S.S.R.

ENGEL, Director;  
MROZOVSKY, Art Manager.

## Workers Film on Tour

*The Road To Freedom*, a four reel film of the workers struggle in all sections of the world, is now being booked on a tour of the country by the International Labor Defense. Three reels were arranged in Germany. The fourth reel, done in America, includes scenes from the demonstrations for Sacco and Vanzetti, the Pennsylvania miners strike and the March 6 demonstrations. For information write the International Labor Defense at 80 East 11 St., New York.



A scene from Nordabe Grieg's *Barabas*, a play produced by the Forsogssoenen, experimental theatre of Copenhagen, Denmark. The group is composed of revolutionary students and workers and receives the assistance of professional players in their productions.

## Danish Workers Art Theatre

Dear Comrades:

We send you a catalogue of an exhibition of Soviet drawings which is being arranged by the Association of Danish artists in Copenhagen. This exhibit will be the first of a series.

We are specially anxious to arrange an exhibit of American proletarian artists for November and plan to show at least 150 drawings of the best you can secure for us. We should like best to have reproductions of what has already appeared as that will show what has been done in America in the past. We would of course, also like to have a few of your originals for comparison, but we leave that to your judgement.

In turn we would like to arrange for a similar exhibit of Scandinavian drawings for you in America. And please put us in touch with Mexican proletarian art groups if any exist now.

Comrade Scherfg, who met you all in America, and whose drawings we note you used in your last issue, has no doubt advised you of our group, those around the Danish *Monde*, the revolutionary students monthly and the Workers film society. We enclose latest numbers of our publications.

We watch the *New Masses* with admiration for its work in the development of a Workers culture in America.

With revolutionary greetings,

HARALD RUE.

Copenhagen, Denmark.

## Imprison Editor of New Masses of Hungary

Aladar Tamas, editor of 100%, a revolutionary magazine of literature, together with a number of contributors, have been imprisoned and brutally treated by the Fascist government of Hungary.

The International Labor Defense was instrumental in making the facts known in this country. Protests from the *New Masses*, thru Michael Gold, editor; the John Reed Club, thru John Dos Passos, and from leading writers, scientists and intellectuals in this country, have been cabled and mailed to prime minister Bechlen, in addition to those of various working class organizations.

Further protests by organizations and individuals are being urged by the International Labor Defense.

## The Bourgeois Movie Critics

### New Masses:

Samuel Brody, for the John Reed Club, invited a number of film-reviewers to take part in a symposium on "The Soviet versus the American Movies." Among the replies received was one from Creighton Peet, erstwhile of the *New York Post*, which caused him, it is said, for using the epithet "lousy." Mr. Peet, now with *The Outlook and Independent*, wrote: "... I am afraid I must refuse that interesting experience... I fail to see the least connection between the present Soviet films and our own. Russian films are made by the Government and are dished out to the population to teach them machinery, wash behind the ears and love the Soviet. American films are sent to a later-day population which understands these things and wants entertainment... fiction. As soon as the Russian people have attained that complete industrialization—that Fordization which they so worship—they will be quite classless. At this point a symposium on the differences, if any, between Russian and American movies will be in order, and I shall be glad to participate. Furthermore, in defense of the American movies it should be pointed out that they are not state-supported and must earn their way. Russian movies are in the position of a "house organ" or "company propaganda."

Mr. Peet has crudely expressed the troubled conscience of the bourgeois film-critic. Bruce Bliven, qualified by prejudice, nostalgia for lost paradises and ignorance of the motion picture, is made film-reviewer for the *New Republic*, and discovers in the Soviet masterpieces, *Old and New*, and *Turkist*, an apotheosis of the machine; whereas *The Silent Enemy*, a dreadful American picture, is undersigned by him as Rousseau's reply to collectivism.

Peet, I happen to know, has enjoyed Soviet films. He chided Griffith for not including *The End of St. Petersburg* among the 50 best films. The last two sentences of his letter are a defense of the inferior movie against the superior Soviet kino. They admit the superiority of collectivist control over capitalist control. Peet has responded to the force of the propaganda of Soviet films, the propaganda which has created the values of these films as cinema; and now he feels guilty as a mouthpiece of his class. Therefore the perversity, the infantile prejudice which calls the Soviet ideal by the bourgeois concept of "Fordization."

Mr. Peet is among those who have supported "the cult of the Soviet film." The treachery of his peevish attack is duplicated even more insidiously in the exaggerated enthusiasm shown for the Soviet film, *Cain and Artem*. This picture, which belongs to the pre-dialectic period of the kino—the Teutonic period, was swallowed by such critics as Alexander Bakshy and by every newspaper commentator, in truth, the fervor exposed the will to disbelieve the persuasive message of the dialectic film. *Cain and Artem*, melancholic and pre-war, lacking positive conviction, served as a retreat for these bankrupt souls and permitted them the cry: "See, I am still a friend of the Russian film!" American public, says Peet, wants "fiction." This is not the only synonym for "entertainment." "Fiction" is what the American public gets: fake experiences!

New York, N. Y.

HARRY ALAN POTAMKIN.

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# LETTERS FROM READERS

## Upton Sinclair Answers A Critic

September 11, 1930.

Dear Sir:

I have your very interesting letter about Russia. I have no doubt that there is a great shortage of food at present in Russia. But I cannot share your opinion that this is a sign of great weakness on the part of the Soviet Government. You say that "to export food when it is needed by a starving populace is an inexhaustibly stupid and inhuman act." In the first place, let me point out that there are five million men out of employment in the United States, which means a very large percentage of our population starving, yet we are continually exporting all kinds of food, and no one gets excited about this. The food goes to other countries to be eaten by the well to do classes of those countries, while the workers in those countries starve, yet no one gets excited about this. In America this food is being sold for the profit of capitalists, who keep the gains. In Russia the food is being sold for the benefit of the Nation, and being invested in industries which ultimately will enrich all the workers of Russia.

You think that the idea of building up Russian industry is "Stalin megalomania." You think that "food and shelter should come first." But what is shelter? It is lumber which must be cut in sawmills, and cement which must be made in cement-mills. Both must be transported on railroads. The food in Russia is being sold to build sawmills, cement-mills, and steel plants for the making of rails and machinery. Russia purchased some thirty thousand tractors last winter, which were used to raise a wheat crop this summer. The bills for those purchases have been coming due, and everything they can transport easily has been shipped out of Russia to keep up the national credit. We have all been taught to admire effort and thrift which are supposed to be characteristic of Americans. We are taught to admire the young man who tightens his belt and works hard, in order that he may have comfort in old age. Why should we now become so excited because Russia is following this most excellent of Yankee precedents?

It is all a question of whether or not Russia is to remain a semi-barbarous, Asiatic country, or become a modern civilized one; whether the peasants are to go on scratching the ground with wooden plows pulled by their women, or whether they are to have automobiles and bathtubs, like our American middle classes. If Russia could get credit, the problem would be simple. Since they cannot get credit, they have to sell the more valuable of their raw materials to buy machinery, and build an industry from the ground up.

It has been a question of how much deprivation they can safely be expected to endure. Perhaps the government has overestimated—I do not know, and certainly you cannot tell from dispatches to any capitalist newspaper. They are doing an enormous

job and they are bound to make enormous mistakes, but the remedy in this case is a simple one. If the food lines become too long and the popular protest too great, they will export a little less food next month and there will be a let-up. But meantime, the thing you call "Stalin megalomania" is, in my opinion, the greatest step in progress ever taken by any nation in history. If it succeeds, and it seems to be succeeding, it will revolutionize not merely the world's industry, but also the world's agriculture.

Sincerely,  
Pasadena, Calif. UPTON SINCLAIR.

## And Now the Artists...

Editor of *New Masses*:

Let me do for the artists what Tom Moore did for your bookreviewers in your last issue.

I have no quarrel with Gropper, Klein, Bard, and Hard. They supply what satire and punch you have and that's plenty! But they, too, could be more timely. The Fish Committee deserved more than you gave them. More satire on unemployment; give Hoover a break; and do the congressional circus. "The Cockeyed World" by Gropper and Gregory in your last issue was more like it. Our gifted fellows should be exposing the hokum around us. And drawing in the language of the streets; get rough. Why not, our writers do it. Can't you induce Art Young to come around often? He has the knack of the keen observer and an uncanny human warmth about him.

Too often our artists go "arty." Take Lozowiek: an almost perfect technician, his drawings have a neutral, stately quality about them. In the *New Masses* they're proletarian art. What do you call them when they appear in the bourgeois business magazines, as they do? Siegel, Dohn, yes even Gellert, swell artists also, have a tendency to stray on occasion. Now all these, Lozowiek included, are great stuff. I like them. But like Marxian criticism in books, right now we need satire and incentive to struggle in our drawings. With the world flaming around our ears (how'd you like the elections in Germany?) these are no days for "art."

Dig your brush in, said. Let's sharpen the talent of our artists to greater revolutionary purpose!

Chicago, Ill.

VERN JESSUP.

Regino Pedrosa—Chinese-Negro poet of Havana, Cuba, first appeared in the *New Masses* in the July issue, in a translation by Langston Hughes.

Louis Lozowiek—has exhibited paintings and lithographs and contributed to the magazines. He has written on art and the theatre for the European and American press. Contributing editor of *New Masses*.

A. Lebedinsky—21 year old artist of Chicago, Ill., made his first appearance in print in the May issue of *New Masses*.



Jacob Burck—born with a pencil in his mouth in 1907. Was star "drawner" in school. Spent most of his youth in Cleveland, Ohio, living the luxurious life of nurse for vegetables in a fruit market, dishwasher, busboy and working up to sign painter. Wanting to paint portraits, for no reason at all came to New York full of ambition and other things. One look at Park Ave. faces, he abandoned bourgeois art and began drawing cartoons for the *Daily Worker*. Now staff cartoonist and still at it.

## In This Issue

Hugo Gellert—who designed the cover has been associated with the *New Masses* since the first issue. Member of the John Reed Club and secretary of the Anti-Horthy League.

Ed Falkowski—24 year old Pennsylvania miner has been working in the past year in the mines of Germany, Poland and Soviet Russia while gathering material for a book on the lives of miners in these countries.

Edward Newhouse—19 year old proletarian writer is now looking for a job.

John Dos Passos—author of the 42nd Parallel and other novels, is at work on his new book in Provincetown, Mass.

Walter Quirt—whose drawings first appeared in *New Masses* during the past year, is now in New York. Contributor to the *Daily Worker* and *Labor Unity*.

Mary Heaton Vorse—author of *Strike*, just published, and other novels, was with the *Masses* and *Liberator* and is contributing editor to the *New Masses*.

Philip Bard—19 year old New York artist, made his first appearance in a recent issue of *New Masses*.

Norman Macleod—is a 24 year old proletarian writer-poet of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Harry Alan Potamkin—critic and poet, lives in New York. Foreign correspondent for *Close-Up*, contributor to the magazines.

L. Klein—is a frequent contributor of satirical drawings. His new paintings will be shown at the various galleries this winter.

Dorothy Day—journalist and novelist, was associated with the *New York Call* and the *Liberator*.

## Greetings from Revolutionary Writers of Germany

Dear Comrades:

We learned that this summer you can look back upon 20 years of existence of the *New Masses*. The "Bund Proletarisch Revolutionärer Schriftsteller Deutschlands" (Revolutionary Writers of Germany) and the editorial board of the *Linkskurve* are glad to take this opportunity of sending you revolutionary greetings.

In the two decades of its existence the *Masses* and the *New Masses* was always a courageous fighter for the cause of the proletariat, always ready to make sacrifices when needed. At a very early date you recognized that for the fighting proletariat art and literature are not aesthetic delights but weapons in the struggle for emancipation. As long ago as before the war the staff of the *Masses* succeeded in summoning to the fray the vanguard of proletarian youth and the best elements among the students.

From the very beginning you opposed the imperialist war clearly and consistently; you earned the revenge of the capitalist wielders of power—The *Masses* was suppressed.

Its reappearance as the *Liberator* was marked by the publication of that extraordinary historical document, the report on the days of the Bolshevik Conquest of Power, by John Reed, one of yours! Lenin's preface and Reed's grave at the Kremlin wall prove that here the reporter was at the same time a comrade in arms and that he had placed all his energy at the service of the Russian proletariat in the days of its conquest of power.

The path to Soviet Russia, which John Reed was the first among you to travel, has remained the path of the *New Masses*. After getting rid of all vacillating elements the *New Masses* today is, internationally, one of the journals which are the standard-bearers of proletarian-revolutionary literature, one of the journals which,—within the capitalist social order—have broken with all bourgeois and reformist concepts as to the purpose of literature and art. Among your closest co-workers there are a number of factory workers who are helping to create the new proletarian realism. It is true that the graphic portion of the *New Masses* still manifests vestiges of an expressionism which does not always harmonize with the true-to-reality writing of its contributors. But of late a change seems to be impending here as well.

Thus we greet you at the beginning of the 21st year of your existence as a fighter for the liberation of the proletarian masses which faces an important task in the revolutionizing of the American workers and farmers, and which—as it fought the imperialist war of 1914-18—will throw all its energy into the endeavor to transform the imperialist war of the future, the war against the Soviet Union, into the war of the world proletariat against world capital!

LUDWIG RENN

For the "Bund Proletarisch-Revolutionärer Schriftsteller Deutschlands"

Berlin, Germany.

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Meanwhile work isn't all by a long shot. There's worry. The poor business manager is worrying herself thinner than she should be. No wonder. Sometimes it's a miracle how we manage to continue!

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*A drawing by Art Young from the Liberator, made at the time of Jack Reed's death, October 1920.*

# JOHN REED

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